REMARKS

The Office Action mailed October 11, 2006, has been carefully considered by Applicant. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing claim amendments and the remarks that follow.

Published Application

Applicant respectfully notes that the published application fails to incorporate the subheadings that were added by Preliminary Amendment to this application, as filed. In addition, the publication includes a spelling error (paragraph [0050], line 14). The word "Blots" should be "slots". Appropriate correction of these items is requested prior to issuance of any patent on this application.

Claim Objections

Claims 1, 4, 5 and 8-14 have been objected to because of informalities. By the present Amendment, the claims are amended to remedy the objections noted in the Office Action.

Allowable Claims

Claims 8-14

Claim 8 is indicated as allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the objections set forth in the Office Action. By the present Amendment, claim 8 is rewritten to overcome the objections and as such, is believed in condition for allowance. Claims 9-14 are also rewritten to overcome the objections. Claims 9-14 depend from claim 8 and are thus also believed in condition for allowance, in accordance with the indication of allowability in the Office Action.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-4 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Lembcke et al U.S. Patent No. 6,173,788. Claims 1-4 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Neely et al 4,615,389. As stated above, the claims are rewritten to overcome the objections set forth in paragraph 1 of the Office Action.

However, the substantive rejections set forth under §102 are respectfully traversed for the reasons stated below.

Claim 1 specifically recites a packer comprising both a continuous inner packing ring and a separate and continuous outer packer ring. The outer packer ring is adapted to enclose an outside of the inner packer ring in a pressure tight manner when in an operating position. A fitting surface of at least one of the inner and outer packer rings is provided with at least one axially directed and through-going slot adapted to receive the line in a pressure tight manner when in the operating position.

Firstly, neither of the cited references teach or suggest the claimed packer having a continuous inner packing ring and a separate and continuous outer packing ring. Lembcke et al '788 (which is thoroughly discussed in the Background of the Invention section of the present application) teaches only one expandable sealing element 12 positioned in casing 10. Fig. 1A teaches a sealing element 12 having a plurality of segments that are longitudinally split. However, there is no continuous inner packer ring and separate and continuous outer packer ring, per claim 1.

The Examiner refers to "tubular on inside of element 12" as a continuous inner packer ring. However, this is incorrect. The "tubular on inside of element 12" does not function as a packer ring. Rather, this is a "tubing string" forming an underlying tubular support structure for sealing element 12, as shown in Figs. 3A and 3B and mentioned in column 1, lines 23-28, and column 3, lines 14-22. In use, sealing element 12 is expanded outwardly to contact with the inner diameter of casing 10, so as to squeeze the sealing element 12 in a pressure tight manner around the control line 16, which is placed in a longitudinal groove 14 formed in the outer surface of sealing element 12. Figs. 1 and 1A show the sealing element 12 when unset, whereas Figs. 2 and 2A show the sealing element 12 when expanded and set against casing 10.

The Examiner also asserts that reference numeral 10 represents "packer rings". This is also incorrect. As noted above, reference numeral 10 refers to the external casing shown in all of the figures of Lembcke et al '788.

It follows that because Lembcke et al '788 does not teach the claimed continuous inner packer ring and separate and continuous outer packer ring, that Lembcke et al '788 also fails to teach or suggest the remaining elements of claim 1. Namely, Lembcke et al '788 fails to teach or suggest *wherein the outer packer ring is adapted to enclose an outside of the inner packer ring in a pressure tight manner when in an operating position* and *wherein a fitting surface of at least one of the packer rings is provided with at least one axially directed and through-going slot adapted to receive the line in a pressure tight manner when in the operating position.* This combination is simply not found in Lembcke et al '788.

Neely et al '389 also completely fails to teach or suggest the claimed packer having both a continuous inner packer ring and a separate and continuous outer packer ring. Firstly, Neely et al '389 does not pertain to well packers, and it certainly does not teach the placement of a line/cable between an inner packer ring and an outer packer ring. The Examiner refers to Figure 2, which shows a prior art solution of passing a cable 28 through an annular packer 30, also described for example in column 4, lines 8-40. The slot referred to in the Office Action (and also shown schematically in Fig. 2) is simply an axial conduit formed through the annular packer 30. Accordingly, there is no feature shown in Fig. 2, or disclosed in any other part of Neely et al '389, that would lead a skilled person to place cable 28 in a slot arranged between an inner packer ring and enclosing outer packer ring in order to pass cable 28 through packer 30 in a pressure tight manner.

Secondly, the Examiner refers to element 16 as an inner packer ring. This is not correct. Element 16 is a tubing string through the packer 30.

It follows that Neely et al '389 also fails to teach or suggest the remaining limitations of claim 1, including *wherein the outer packer ring is adapted to enclose an outside of the inner packer ring in a pressure tight manner when in an operating position* and *wherein a fitting surface of at least one of the packer rings is provided with at least*

one axially directed and through-going slot adapted to receive the line in a pressure tight manner when in the operating position.

For the reasons stated above, claim 1 is believed allowable over the cited references.

Claims 2-7

Claims 2-7 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1 and are thus also believed allowable for the reasons stated above, as well as the detailed subject matter recited therein.

Claim 15

New claim 15 is added and is believed allowable for the reasons stated above regarding claim 1.

Conclusion

The present application is thus believed in condition for allowance. Such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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